



BOROUGH OF SHAFTESBURY.

Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health  
for the Year 1941.

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This Report is prepared on the lines asked for by the Minister of Health in Circular 2314. In accordance with his directions, most information usually contained in the Report is omitted and filed for future reference. Statistics, while being collated and recorded, are only quoted in this Report where they are of particular significance.

Infectious Disease

The Isolation Hospital of the North Dorset Joint Hospital Board (of which your Authority is a constituent member), was destroyed by fire during the early part of the year, and was replaced by a temporary Isolation Hospital of 26 beds established at Vine House, Sturminster Newton.

There were 8 cases of Scarlet Fever during the year, 5 of these cases being attributed to an infected milk supply. Details of this outbreak were reported to you in a Special Report during the year.

There was no case of Diphtheria in the Borough during the year.

Diphtheria Immunisation

The end of the first nine months of the Council's Scheme providing immunisation against Diphtheria, free of cost, to all children between the ages of one and fifteen years, showed that 70% of children of school age had received treatment but only 42% of children under school age.

Scabies

This has been the major public health problem during the year. The disease is not a statutory notifiable disease and therefore no accurate figures are available to demonstrate the increase in the prevalence of the condition in your area during the year - as the condition was equally prevalent throughout the North Dorset District, the figures of admission to the Sick Bay from the whole North Dorset District give a clear indication of the increased incidence of the disease.

In 1939 (during the last three months of the year) 8 cases (equivalent to 32 in a full year), were admitted to the Sick Bay.

In 1940 the comparable figure was 45.

In 1941 the comparable figure was 214.

In anticipation of similar public health problems if overcrowding was allowed to occur as a result of the unwise billeting of evacuees, a warning was given to Billeting Officers in August 1940. In order to facilitate ascertainment and early treatment you sought powers to make this disease compulsorily notifiable, in March 1941. You were not able to obtain these



powers. Throughout the year your policy with regard to Scabies has been to provide in-patient Sick Bay treatment for all cases where this was requested by a Medical Practitioner, and to carry out disinfection of clothes and bedclothes. The weakness in your Scheme for dealing with this condition has been the absence of means by which all cases, and home contacts, coming to the notice of your Medical Officer of Health could be fully investigated, and treatment offered to those found by investigation to be sufferers, together with follow up of cases after treatment so that cases showing a recurrence of the condition could be dealt with immediately before further persons had become infected by them. To close this gap in your Scheme, and to enable you to put into effect the Scabies Order 1941, your Medical Officer of Health advised you in December 1941 to appoint, in conjunction with the other Districts in North Dorset, a Public Health Nurse with clerical assistance. Unless full and complete measures are adopted to deal with Scabies as now established, I can see no reason to anticipate but that its increased incidence will remain established in the district.

### Sanitary Work

Water Supply (Chlorination) - On the direction given by the Minister of Health in Circular 2086A constant chlorination of the Borough Main Water supply was put into effect during the year.

District Slaughterhouse - In view of representations made with regard to the unsatisfactory condition of the District Slaughterhouse at Littledown, the slaughterhouse was closed down in November 1941, and the slaughtering previously carried on there has been carried on at Sherborne. This has not proved entirely satisfactory in so far as all meat passing through that slaughterhouse has not been subjected to inspection after slaughter. At the time of preparing this Report steps are being taken to ensure increased inspection of meat at the Sherborne District Slaughterhouse.

Sanitary Inspection - The total number of Sanitary Inspections (under all headings) carried out during the year was 993. 142 Informal Notices were served of which 116 were complied with. 7 Statutory Notices were served of which 5 were complied with.

Sewerage - The Military Authorities have shown ready cooperation by avoiding the use of bucket or pail closet latrines wherever a sewer was available, substituting water closets.

### Evacuation

As compared with 1940 the number of new evacuees arriving or remaining in the district was reduced. Steps were taken, however, to provide facilities for those already in the district. Arrangements were commenced for the establishment of communal feeding arrangements. From a public health point of view, in addition to the amenity offered, I consider this to be an excellent provision on the part of the Authority.

During the early part of the year a small but useful Hostel for children presenting billeting difficulties was established at No. 1 Old Boundary Road.

Ready reciprocal use, by all the Authorities in North Dorset of the various Evacuation Hostels and Nurseries within the several districts, has been achieved by the ready goodwill and

mutual assistance of each of the Chief Billeting Officers.

In termination I would record, with gratitude, the courtesy and support given to me by your Council, the assistance given to me by your other Officers and the efficient service rendered by my clerk.

NOEL F. PEARSON,  
Medical Officer of Health.

5th May, 1942.

